

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1.       (*Currently Amended*) Method for producing modified flours or modified ~~powdery to grainy, especially finely grained~~, starch-containing products from a ground or comminuted raw material product, predominantly containing starch, the method comprising the following steps:

- a)       mixing and wetting ~~the~~ at least one comminuted, starch-containing raw material product with water and/or water vapor and optionally further additives by moving the raw material product in a mixing chamber of a preconditioner during a first preconditioner residence time ~~for mixing~~,
- b)       allowing the water and/or the water vapor to act on the at least one starch-containing raw material product by moving the raw material product in an action chamber of the preconditioner during a second preconditioner ~~first~~ residence time ~~for action to obtain a preconditioned mixture~~,
- c)       extruding the preconditioned mixture of water and raw material product, preconditioned in the mixing chamber and the action chamber in ~~the~~ steps a) and

b), manipulating the extruding process variables of ~~the~~ temperature, ~~the~~ pressure, ~~the~~ water content of the preconditioned mixture, ~~the~~ mechanical energy introduced during extruding, and the residence time of the mixture in the extruder ~~being~~ adjusted so that an at least partial plasticization and/or gelatinization of the raw material product to a conveyable mixture, containing a modified starch, takes place during extruding, and

d) pelletizing the conveyable mixture and dry grinding the obtained pellets to ~~[[a]] an predominantly powdery to grainy~~ intermediate product, containing modified starch,

wherein the ~~powdery to grainy~~ intermediate product, obtained by ~~pelletizing~~ pelletizing in step d), is agglomerated by:

e) mixing and wetting the ~~powdery to grainy~~ intermediate product, obtained in step d), with a fluid and, ~~as well as~~ optionally, other additives by moving the intermediate product in a mixing chamber of an agglomerator during a ~~second~~ first agglomerator mixing residence time ~~for mixing~~, and

f) ~~letting~~ allowing the fluid to act on the powdery to grainy intermediate product ~~(1)~~ by moving the intermediate product in an action chamber of the

agglomerator during a second agglomerator residence time ~~for action~~, so that agglomerates are formed from ~~the~~ particles of the intermediate, containing the modified starch.

2. *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein the preconditioner, in which steps a) and b) are carried out, and the agglomerator, in which steps e) and f) are carried out, each have a mixing chamber above an action chamber, which are connected with one another, each chamber having a rotor shaft for moving the intermediate product in the mixing chamber and in the action chamber, which extends along the respective chamber and which rotates about its longitudinal axis and has radially protruding conveying elements ~~provided all around with tools~~.

3. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein the preconditioner and the agglomerator have the same construction.

4. *(Previously Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein the residence time of the product in the mixing chamber during step e) is about 0.2 to 5 seconds.

5.       *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein the residence time of the product in the action chamber during step f) is about 10 seconds to 15 minutes

6.       *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein the mixing chamber is filled to the extent of about 1 to 5% with the intermediate product, a fluid, and, optionally, other additives and the action chamber is filled with intermediate product to the extent of about 25 to 75% with the intermediate product, a fluid and, optionally, other additives.

7.       *(Cancelled)*

8.       *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 4, wherein the pressure in the mixing chamber and the action chamber is atmospheric pressure and the temperature of the chambers in each case is between ambient temperature and about 98C.

9.       *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein a combination of several fluids, ~~which are contained in~~ selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of water, water vapor, sugar solutions and edible oil, is ~~or~~

~~will be~~ metered in to wet ~~the powdery to grainy product~~ either or both of the starch-containing raw material or the intermediate product.

10. (*Currently Amended*) The method of claim 9, wherein the fluid or fluids is/are ~~or will be~~ atomized when metered in.

11. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 1, wherein the agglomerates, obtained in step f), are classified according to size.

12. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 11, the classification takes place in a sifter.

13. (*Currently Amended*) The method of claim 11, wherein a the fraction of the agglomerates, which exceed a specified maximum agglomerate size, initially is supplied to a comminuting device, and subsequently, once again is supplied to the agglomerator.

14. (*Currently Amended*) The method of claim 11, wherein a the fraction of the agglomerates, which are smaller than a specified minimum agglomerate size, once again is supplied to the agglomerator.

15. *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 13, wherein a ~~the~~ fraction of the agglomerates, which are smaller than the maximum agglomerates size and/or larger than the minimum agglomerates size, is collected as end product.

16. *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein said method is carried out continuously ~~the~~ during and between a) and f) are carried out continuously .

17. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein further additives[[,]] such as flavors, spices, coloring materials, emulsifiers, acids and the like, are metered in during at least one of the steps a) to f).

18. *(Cancelled)*

19. *(Cancelled)*

20. *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 2 ~~18~~, wherein the shaft of the mixing chamber is driven at a rate of about 50 rpm to 900 rpm and the shaft of the action chamber is driven at a rate of about 5 rpm to 30 rpm.

21. *(Cancelled)*

22. (*Currently Amended*) The method of claim 2 ~~18~~, wherein the mixing chamber essentially has the shape of a horizontal cylinder, the axis of rotation of the shaft extending along the axis of the cylinder and the action chamber essentially is in the shape of a horizontal cylinder, the axis of rotation of the shaft extending along the axis of the cylinder.

23. (*Cancelled*)

24. (*Currently amended*) The method of claim 2 ~~18~~, wherein the capacity of the action chamber is about 1.5 times to 10 times that of the mixing chamber.

25. (*Previously Presented*) The method of claim 1, wherein the fluid, used in step e) for wetting the intermediate product and in step f) for acting on the intermediate product, contains at least water vapor and/or water.

26. (*Withdrawn*) Installation for producing modified flours or modified, powdery to grainy, especially finally grained, starch-containing products from a ground or comminuted raw material product, predominantly containing starch the installation comprising:

a preconditioner with a mixing chamber for mixing and wetting the at least one comminuted, starch-containing raw material product with water and/or water vapor as well as optionally further additives and an action chamber for permitting the water and/or water vapor to act on the at least one raw material product,

an extruder for extruding the preconditioned mixture, containing water and the raw material product and emerging from the mixing chamber and the action chamber, the extruder having a pelletizing device for pelletizing the mixture emerging from the extruder,

a mill for grinding the pellets dry into a powdery to grainy intermediate product, and

an agglomerator for agglomerating the powdery to grainy intermediate product,

wherein the agglomerator comprises:

a mixing chamber for mixing and wetting the powdery to grainy intermediate product, obtained in the mill, with a fluid, and an action chamber for allowing the fluid to action the powdery to grainy intermediate product.

27. (Withdrawn) The installation of claim 26, wherein the preconditioner and/or the agglomerator each have a mixing chamber above an action chamber, which are connected with one another, each chamber having a



rotor shaft, which extends along the respective chamber and is provided with tools around the shaft.

28. (Withdrawn) The installation of claim 26, wherein the precondition has the same construction as the agglomerator.

29. (Withdrawn) The installation of claim 26, wherein the mixing chamber essentially has the shape of a horizontal cylinder, the axis of rotation of the shaft extending along the axis of the cylinder.

30. (Withdrawn) The installation of claim 26, wherein the action chamber essentially has the shape of a horizontal cylinder, the axis of rotation of the shaft extending along the axis of the cylinder.

31. *(Currently Amended)* Modified flour, ~~which comprises~~ comprising agglomerates, which are produced from a ground or comminuted, predominantly starch-containing raw material product, according to the method of claim 1.

32. *(Previously Presented)* The modified flour of claim 31, wherein the agglomerates range in size essentially from about 200  $\mu\text{m}$  to 5 mm.

33. *(Currently Amended)* The method of claim 1, wherein said ground or comminuted raw material product, predominantly containing starch includes starch or flours from grains or tubers, selected from the group consisting of wheat, rye flour, corn flour, potato flour, tapioca flour, ~~etc.~~ and their mixtures ~~and the like~~.

34. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 4, wherein the residence time of the product in the mixing chamber during step e) is about 0.3 to 2 seconds.

35. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 5, wherein the residence time of the product in the action chamber during step f) is about 15 seconds to 60 seconds.

36. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 13, wherein said comminuting device comprises an impact mill.

37. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 11, wherein ~~a~~ the fraction of the agglomerates, which exceed a specified maximum agglomerate

size, initially is supplied to a comminuting device, and subsequently, together with the product obtained in step d), once again is supplied to the agglomerator.

38. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 11, wherein ~~a~~ the fraction of the agglomerates, which are smaller than a specified minimum agglomerate size, together with the product obtained in step d), once again is supplied to the agglomerator.

39. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 17, wherein said further additives are selected from the group consisting of flavors, spices, coloring materials, emulsifiers, and acids ~~and the like~~.

40. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 20, wherein the mixing chamber is driven at a rate of about 700 rpm.

41. *(Previously Presented)* The method of claim 24, wherein the capacity of the action chamber is about twice to five times that of the mixing chamber.

42. *(Withdrawn)* Installation for producing modified flours or modified, powdery to grainy, especially finally grained, starch-containing products from a ground or comminuted raw material product, predominantly containing starch, using the method of claim 1, the installation having the following parts or machines:

a preconditioner with a mixing chamber for mixing and wetting the at least one comminuted, starch-containing raw material product

with water and/or water vapor as well as optionally further additives and an action chamber for permitting the water and/or water vapor to act on the at least one raw material product,

an extruder for extruding the preconditioned mixture, containing water and the raw material product and emerging from the mixing chamber and the action chamber, the extruder having a pelletizing device for pelletizing the mixture emerging from the extruder,

a mill for grinding the pellets dry into a powdery to grainy intermediate product and

an agglomerator for agglomerating the powdery to grainy intermediate product,

wherein the agglomerator comprises:

a mixing chamber for mixing and wetting the powdery to grainy intermediate product, obtained in the mill, with a fluid, and an action chamber for allowing the fluid to action the powdery to grainy intermediate product.

43. (Withdrawn) The installation of claim 26, wherein the mixing chamber for mixing and wetting the powdery to grainy intermediate product, obtained in the mill, with a fluid also mixes further additives.

44. (*Currently Amended*) The modified flour of claim 31, wherein the starch-containing raw material product includes starch or flour from grain or tubers selected from the group consisting of wheat, rye flour, corn flour, potato flour, tapioca flour, ~~etc.~~ and their mixtures ~~and the like~~.

45. (*Previously Presented*) The modified flour of claim 32, wherein the agglomerates range in size essentially from 500  $\mu\text{m}$  to 2mm.